

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for computerized monitoring of inventory of pharmaceuticals for inmates and dispensation of prescribed medication to inmates in correctional facilities in conjunction with computerized records including an electronic medical record stored in a computer having a computer memory and containing information about an inmate to receive prescribed medication and the inmate's medical history, the method comprising the steps of:

reviewing the electronic medical record to verify that the prescribed medication is suitable for the inmate;

authorizing release of the prescribed medication for the inmate if the prescribed medication has been verified as suitable for the inmate;

labeling a unit packet of the prescribed medication for dispensing to the inmate;

delivering the unit packet of the prescribed medication to a correctional facility unit that houses the inmate;

transferring the prescribed medication within the correctional facility unit to administer the prescribed medication to the inmate;

forming a record in the computer of dispensing the unit packet of the prescribed medication to the inmate;

forming a record in the computer indicating verification that the inmate received the unit packet of the prescribed medication; and

forming a record in the computer verifying whether the inmate took the unit packet of the prescribed medication.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of reviewing the electronic medical record includes performing the step of automatically reviewing the electronic medical record for drug-drug interactions and allergies upon entry of a prescription into the computer.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of reviewing the electronic medical record includes performing the step of manually reviewing the electronic medical record prior to authorizing release of the prescribed medication.
4. The method of claim 1, further including the step of comparing the prescribed medication with a drug formulary of approved medication stored in the computer memory upon entry of a prescription into the computer.
5. The method of claim 4, further including the step of recommending a substitute medication if the step of comparing the prescribed medication with the drug formulary of approved medication indicates the prescribed medication is not contained with the drug formulary of approved medication prior to the step of authorizing release of the prescribed medication.
6. The method of claim 1, further including the step of verifying that the inmate is the inmate who has been prescribed the prescribed medication prior to forming a record in the computer of dispensing the unit packet of the prescribed medication to the inmate.
7. The method of claim 1, further including the step of adding inmate enrollment data records to the electronic medical record if information related to a new inmate is not already present.

8. The method of claim 1, further including the step of sorting each unit packet into a shipment in accordance with a shipping schedule for delivery of the unit packets to each correctional facility after the prescribed medication has been labeled.
9. The method of claim 1, further including the step of updating the inventory of pharmaceuticals at the correctional facility in response to the step of delivering the unit packet of the prescribed medication to a correctional facility unit.
10. The method of claim 8, further including the step of caching each electronic medical record for each inmate contained within each shipment scheduled to be shipped within a predefined time period prior to the step of reviewing the electronic medical record.
11. The method of claim 8, further including the step of caching data related to each label to be printed for each shipment scheduled to be shipped within a predefined time period prior to printing the label.
12. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of forming a record in the computer verifying whether the inmate took the unit packet of the prescribed medication indicates that the inmate did not take the unit packet of prescribed medication and further includes the steps of:
 - subsequently locating the unit packet;
 - returning the unit packet of prescribed medication, if suitable for future use, to a central pharmacy for reclamation; and
 - adjusting the inventory of pharmaceuticals accordingly.

13. The method of claim 12, further including the step of adjusting the inventory of pharmaceuticals for inmates in correctional facilities following the step of delivering the unit packet of the prescribed medication to a correctional facility unit that houses the inmate.
14. The method of claim 1, further including the step of automatically refilling the prescribed medication for chronic conditions if the step of reviewing the computerized inmate record and the electronic medical record to verify that the prescribed medication is suitable for the inmate has already been performed for the prescribed medication.
15. The method of claim 1, further including the step of scheduling a time period in which the prescribed medication is to be dispensed to the inmate.
16. A method for computerized monitoring of inventory of pharmaceuticals for inmates in correctional facilities in conjunction with computer records including an electronic medical record stored in a computer having a computer memory and a printer, the electronic medical record containing information about an inmate to receive prescribed medication and the inmate's medical history, the method comprising the steps of:
 - reviewing the electronic medical record to verify that the prescribed medication is suitable for the inmate;
 - authorizing release of the prescribed medication for the inmate if the prescribed medication has been verified as suitable for the inmate; and
 - printing a label with the printer for the prescribed medication to place upon a unit packet of the prescribed medication for dispensing to the inmate.

17. The method of claim 16, further including the step of delivering the unit packet of the prescribed medication to a correctional facility unit that houses the inmate.
18. The method of claim 17, further including the step of adjusting a correctional facility unit inventory based upon the unit packet received by the correctional facility unit.
19. The method of claim 16, further including the step of sorting each unit packet of prescribed medication in accordance with a shipment schedule for delivery to the correctional facility units.
20. The method of claim 16, wherein the step of reviewing the electronic medical record includes comparing the prescribed medication with a drug formulary of approved medication stored in the computer memory upon entry of a prescription into the computer.
21. The method of claim 20, further including the step of recommending a substitute medication if the step of comparing the prescribed medication with the drug formulary of approved medication indicates the prescribed medication is not contained with the drug formulary of approved medication prior to the step of authorizing release of the prescribed medication.
22. The method of claim 21, further including the step of sorting the unit packets into a shipment in accordance with a shipping schedule for delivery of the unit packets to each correctional facility after the prescribed medication has been labeled.
23. The method of claim 22, further including the step of caching each electronic medical record for each inmate contained within each shipment scheduled to be shipped within a predefined time period prior to the step of reviewing the electronic medical record.

24. The method of claim 22, further including the step of caching data related to each label to be printed for each shipment scheduled to be shipped within a predefined time period prior to printing the label.

25. A method for computerized monitoring of dispensation of prescribed medication to inmates in correctional facilities in conjunction with computerized records including an electronic medical record stored in a computer having a computer memory, the electronic medical record containing information about an inmate to receive prescribed medication and the inmate's medical history, the method comprising the steps of:

forming a record in the computer of dispensing the unit packet of the prescribed medication to the inmate;

forming a record in the computer indicating verification that the inmate received the unit packet of the prescribed medication; and

forming a record in the computer verifying whether the inmate took the unit packet of the prescribed medication.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein the step of forming a record in the computer verifying whether the inmate took the unit packet of the prescribed medication indicates that the inmate did not take the unit packet of prescribed medication and further includes the steps of:

subsequently locating the unit packet;

returning the unit packet of prescribed medication, if suitable for future use, to a central pharmacy for reclamation; and

adjusting the inventory of pharmaceuticals accordingly.

27. A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a machine readable code of program instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps of monitoring pharmaceutical inventory and monitoring of dispensation of prescribed medication to inmates in correctional facilities in conjunction with an electronic medical record containing information about an inmate to receive the prescribed medication and the inmate's medical history, the method steps of the program instructions in the machine readable code in the program storage device comprising the steps of:

reviewing the electronic medical record;

authorizing release of a prescribed medication for the inmate;

printing a label for the prescribed medication to place upon an unit packet of the prescribed medication;

forming a record in the computer of dispensing the unit packet of the prescribed medication to the inmate;

forming a record in the computer indicating verification that the inmate received the unit packet of the prescribed medication; and

forming a record in the computer of verifying whether the inmate took the unit packet of the prescribed medication.

28. The program storage device of Claim 27, wherein the method steps of the program instructions in the machine readable code in the program storage device further include the steps of:

shipping each unit packet of the prescribed medication to a correctional facility unit containing the inmate; and

adjusting the pharmaceutical inventory based upon receipt of the unit packet of the prescribed medication by the correctional facility unit.

29. The program storage device of Claim 28, wherein the method steps of the program instructions in the machine readable code in the program storage device further include the step of sorting each unit packet into a shipment in accordance with a shipping schedule for delivery of each unit packet to each correctional facility after the prescribed medication has been labeled.

30. The program storage device of Claim 28, wherein the method step of updating the inventory of pharmaceuticals in the method steps of the program instructions in the machine readable code in the program storage device is performed in response to the step of delivering each unit packet of the prescribed medication to a correctional facility unit.

31. The program storage device of Claim 28, wherein the method steps of the program instructions in the machine readable code in the program storage device further include the step of caching each electronic medical record for each inmate contained within each shipment scheduled to be shipped within a predefined time period prior to the step of reviewing the electronic medical record.

32. The program storage device of Claim 28, wherein the method steps of the program instructions in the machine readable code in the program storage device further include the step of caching data related to each label to be printed for each shipment scheduled to be shipped within a predefined time period prior to printing the label.

33. A computerized system for monitoring of pharmaceutical inventory and dispensation of medication to inmates in correctional facilities in conjunction with an electronic medical record stored in a computer having a computer memory and a printer, the electronic medication record containing information about an inmate to receive prescribed medication and the inmate's medical history, the system comprising:

a pharmacy database stored in the computer memory for maintaining records related to a pharmaceutical inventory for correctional facilities and for maintaining a drug formulary of approved medication;

a pharmacist review workstation to enable a pharmacist to simultaneously review the inmate's electronic medical record and an inmate's prescription in the computer memory and upon review of the inmate's prescription, approve the prescription;

a pharmacist technician workstation to enable pharmacist technicians to print labels with the printer for application to the inmate's prescribed medication upon command;

a medication dispensation workstation to enable the prescribed medication to be dispensed and a medication compliance history to be recorded in the computer memory; and

a communications network electronically interconnecting the electronic medical record database, the pharmacy database, the pharmacist review workstation, the pharmacist technician workstation, the medication dispensation workstation, the printer, and the computer memory to communicate with each other.

34. A computerized system for monitoring pharmaceutical inventory in correctional facilities in conjunction with an electronic medical record containing information about an inmate to received prescribed medication and the inmate's medical history, the system having a computer memory, a printer, and further comprising:

a pharmacy database stored in the computer memory for maintaining records related to a pharmaceutical inventory for correctional facilities and for maintaining a drug formulary of approved medication;

a pharmacist review workstation to enable a pharmacist to simultaneously review the inmate's medical information and an inmate's prescription in the computer memory and upon review of the inmate's prescription, approve the prescription;

a pharmacist technician workstation to enable pharmacist technicians to print labels with the printer for application to the inmate's prescribed medication upon command; and

a communications network electronically interconnecting the electronic medical record database, the pharmacy database, the pharmacist review workstation, the pharmacist technician workstation, the printer, and the computer memory to communicate with each other.

35. A computerized system for monitoring dispensation of medication to inmates in correctional facilities in conjunction with an electronic medical record containing information about an inmate to receive prescribed medication and the inmate's medical history, the system comprising:

 a medication dispensation workstation to enable the prescribed medication to be dispensed and a medication compliance history to be recorded in the computer memory; and

 a communications network to enable the electronic medical record and, the medication dispensation workstation to communicate with each other.

36. The computerized system for monitoring dispensation of medication according to claim 35, further including a pharmacy database for maintaining records related to a pharmaceutical inventory for correctional facilities and for maintaining a drug formulary of approved medication.